

of President Abraham Lincoln in the Capitol Rotunda. All Members are encouraged to attend.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I recently received a letter from a woman in Sultan, WA, that I want to share with you today as we work to finalize the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. She wrote to me because her family is going through some very hard times and she doesn't know where else to turn.

Her husband, who is a veteran who received a Purple Heart, lost his job in October. Her own wages have been cut and her daughter and her 3-year-old granddaughter had to move in with them because they can't afford rent and childcare. At the end of this month, they are going to lose their home to foreclosure.

She said her family is living "both literally and figuratively on the edge." As she put it:

We are the textbook middle class . . . sliding into a jobless, homeless, and hopeless future.

Mr. President, I come this afternoon to share her story with you because the pain she is going through is being felt by millions of Americans who have lost their jobs and their homes in the last couple of years. Families such as hers feel as though their lives are slipping out from under them, and they are looking to us for help.

The House and the Senate have taken a critical step forward by passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It is going to give our economy the jolt it needs to create jobs and help our country get back on track. But we are not done yet. We still need to get that bill to the President. Every day we wait, the economy gets worse. Every day, more jobs are cut, more small businesses close their doors, more homes are lost, and more families are forced to make new sacrifices just to make ends meet. That is why I have come to the floor this evening.

The American people need action now. They need us to set aside our differences and put a final bill into President Obama's hands so we can start the real work of getting our country moving again. So I urge my colleagues in the House and the Senate to finish this job and give this bill final approval.

We know the bill that is coming out of conference is not perfect, but it makes tried-and-true investments that will help create jobs and get our country back on track. It makes a down-payment on the future by rebuilding our roads and bridges, our water and sewer plants—investments that will put people to work today and strengthen our economy for years to come.

The bill expands our renewable energy options, creating good-paying jobs in a growing industry and helping to end our addiction to oil. It will also help improve health care and cut costs by computerizing health records and boosting research. It invests in education and job training that will help our laid-off workers learn new skills and find new jobs.

Mr. President, our economy is not going to recover overnight. We still have very hard times ahead. But I am confident this is the urgent action we need to begin moving forward again. I want to take a few minutes this evening to talk about what it will mean for families in my home State of Washington.

To begin with, this bill offers a helping hand to thousands of families in Washington State who are struggling to meet their basic needs. In the last couple of months, we have seen a demand for food stamps, Medicaid, and other programs rise dramatically. Food stamp applications are up 15 percent over last year. State workers have said they are having trouble keeping up with the demand. This bill is going to help us meet the needs of the most vulnerable families by extending unemployment insurance benefits, expanding food stamps, and increasing funding to help with Medicaid costs.

This isn't just the moral thing to do, we would not be able to dig ourselves out of this economic crisis until people have money to spend. So this is the right decision economically as well. The money we spend on unemployment and food stamps will go right back into the economy as people use the benefits to pay for things they need. That is the same reason we are working to get money into the hands of working families and small business owners.

Like families all across the country, people in my home State are scared, they are struggling to make ends meet, and they aren't spending. So we include in this bill an income tax cut that will give almost 2½ million Washington workers some extra money in their paychecks every week. Because this bill is about stabilizing our economy and getting our country back on track, we are also including funding to help struggling families pay for critical expenses, such as childcare or health care or college tuition.

I was a working mom. I know that reliable childcare is what makes it possible for millions of parents to go to work every day. This bill increases the childcare development block grant so more parents can afford quality daycare for their kids. It increases Pell grants and higher education tax credits to help thousands of our students stay in college, get their degree, and then qualify for a good-paying job. Importantly, the bill also makes COBRA more affordable so people who have lost their jobs can keep their health insurance while they look for work.

So we are helping working families pay for their basic expenses, stay in school, and keep their jobs and their health care. That is critical to getting our country back on track.

But the biggest jolt to our economy will come from the millions of jobs we are creating in construction, in environmental cleanup, and in energy development. In my State, this bill will help put thousands of people to work fixing our roads and bridges and upgrading our mass transit and ferry systems. These are investments that will also make our communities stronger and more attractive to businesses in the long run. It will help us take a big step toward energy independence and lower energy costs for everyone.

This bill expands the Bonneville Power Administration's existing borrowing authority, and it will help us take advantage of more renewable energy sources and hire hundreds of thousands of new employees who will be trained to update our energy transmission systems. That will allow the new energy we hope to produce, such as wind, get to our homes and our businesses and save all of us money in the future.

This bill will also help create and preserve jobs at Hanford, and it will keep our legal and moral commitment to cleaning up nuclear waste in Washington State and across the country. It will also ensure that we can fulfill our responsibility to our Nation's veterans by making investments in badly needed construction and repair projects at our VA hospitals and medical facilities in Washington State and across the country.

But we are not just creating construction jobs in this bill. We are helping our local and State governments keep critical employees on the job—our police and our firefighters, our teachers, our university employees. This economic crisis has hit State and local governments terribly hard. They have had to make cuts across the board, including in education and emergency response. Local officials have told me they are very worried about what that will mean for their communities. Police chiefs and sheriffs have been warning me that I.D. theft, burglary, bank robbery, fraud, and gang activity are going to increase as jobs vanish and people become more desperate.

In this bill we provide money for Byrne and COPS grants to help keep